

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 28 FEBRUARY 2023**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 28 February 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

**OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

**Objectives and aims**

Accept Care Ltd offers bespoke supported living care packages to people with learning disabilities, mental health issues and other diverse and complex needs. A unique plan is created for each service user that aims to meet their needs, wishes, preferences, ambitions and aspirations. This allows, where possible, for the individual to retain as much control as possible around their care. Accept Care Ltd also provides an individualised approach to support planning and positive risk management. Each individual is supported by a team of well-trained staff to ensure that the support provided is consistent in areas of social, emotional, physical, medical, educational, vocational, financial, leisure activities, along with recreational needs and wishes. Service users are actively involved in the recruitment of their staff wherever possible.

**Significant activities**

The supported living services are provided in properties rented directly by the individuals from a social care landlord.

Accept Care Ltd operates within two blocks of eight flats, one seven-bedroom house, one nine-bedroom house, and a further two bedroom house. Supporting thirty-three service users in Ash Grove, Consett, Co Durham. There is a further four bedded houses at Bearpark for people with complex autism and twenty flats at Esh Winning, Co Durham for clients with a mild to moderate learning disability.

Accept Care Ltd supports approximately fifty-four people in their own homes and in the three main locations in Consett, Bearpark and Esh Winning. It also supports an additional six people within the inspiring Lives day service.

The services are funded by Durham County Council, Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust and the County Durham Clinical Commissioning groups. The service has 4 vacancies as of 28 February 2023 with an expectation that all will be filled in the coming months. The service continues to work closely with commissioners and provides best value services that look hopeful for the future with high demand for the skills and expertise offered by the Charity.

The main aim of the Charity for the coming year is to continue to develop the inspiring lives day services so as to increase capacity and to move to paperless ways of working. We have maintained our current grading with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and that is rated "Good" in all five areas. Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well lead.

**Public benefit**

Accept Care Ltd aims to improve the lives and well-being of individuals with learning disabilities, mental health issues and other complex needs enabling them to live in and be part of the community. Accept Care Ltd strive to improve the self-esteem and confidence of the individual enabling them to take part in day care activities, which will enhance their ability to make choices and live a more independent life.

Accept Care Ltd, is registered with the Care Quality Commission for England and Wales and registered as a charity in Northern Ireland on 19 November 2014.

Success for Accept Care is measured over a longer period of time than it is for most organisations. We have twice yearly surveys which are sent to service users, professionals, families and staff. This measures our success in the five areas identified by The Care Quality Commission. We are also responsive to comments, compliments and complaints which come into the organisation from time to time. The Care Quality Commission undertakes contactless monitoring of the organisation through third party stakeholders on a regular basis. We get reports of this once undertaken.

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**STRATEGIC REPORT**

**Achievement and performance**

We have managed our reserves well in the face of significant pressures to support staff with the cost of living increases. We have plans to fill all vacancies. We have improved on staff satisfaction, staff turnover and reduced the number of complaints we have received. We continue to reduce the number of behavioural incidents we deal with which demonstrate that staff are reducing conflict and maintaining positive interactions with clients. We are embracing the principles of Positive Behavioural Support and are benefitting from a more person centred way of working.

**Financial review**

**Reserves policy**

The Trustees have reviewed the charity's needs for reserves and have agreed that financial reserves (the "Emergency Operating Reserve" - EOR) should be held.

It has no endowment funding and is entirely dependent for income on funding from year to year which is inevitably subject to fluctuation.

The target level for the EOR has been set at 60 days operating costs, excluding wages costs, a sum of approximately £60,000.

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**STRATEGIC REPORT**

**Financial review**

**Designated Funds Reserves**

In addition to the EOR it was agreed that a designated funds reserve must be held to cover project costs outside the current operating budget and/or outside the current financial year. The level of this reserve will be the accumulated sum of all such funds in the accounts of the charity at each year end.

Items covered this year:

We have increased the designated funds for the cost of replacing the minibuses to £80,000 and the sustainability fund to help reduce the cost of overheads and to help improve our environmental footprint to £127,600. Due to the current economic climate, we don't feel that the time is right to invest in new technology. We will of course continue to monitor the situation in the coming year.

£150,000 Emergency Support Fund to support the organisation if another pandemic happens has also remained the same.

A further £5,436 has been added to the Development Refurbishment fund, the Activity equipment fund is £36,742.

We have no restricted funds on 28 February 2023.

When taking the commitments into account, the charity is left with £433,620 of unrestricted and undesignated reserves.

Tracking and managing shared payments between the Clinical Commissioning Groups and Durham County Council has been successful enabling us to recover a large amount of debt owed. We are now more accurately checking and tracking payments. We remain challenged by poor communications between both parties and failures in notifying us in changes of funding split changes, hourly rates and agreed dates for the start of funding splits. These have all been contributory to the issues we have faced in getting clarity over funding. Moving to scheduled payments has though improved matters though some individual amounts remain incorrect.

The hourly rate offered by Durham County Council for 22/23 was £16.07 per hour. The new hourly rate for 23/24 has increased to £17.64, an increase of 9.77%. This rate comes into effect in April 23.

Our main risk is the unknown and the impact of further pandemics and changes in the economy and how that affects us to recruit, train and retain staff. To that end we are actively recruiting, and our retention is carefully monitored. Over the past year we have seen the effects of the cost of inflation. This has had a direct impact on us with staffing having the biggest impact. To ensure we stayed competitive and to support our employees through this period we gave additional gross bonuses throughout the year costing approximately £85,000. In addition, a Personal Support Worker basic hourly rate has increased over the year by 10% to £11.00 to ensure we remain competitive and attract good quality staff. As a result, it has had reduced our reserves. For the current year we will monitor the economic climate and staffing levels closely. We still have sufficient levels of reserves to temporarily increase salaries or provide hardship bonuses to staff in the event of further inflation.

Our focus for the coming year is to increase and retain staffing levels, reduce the use of agency staff and to develop Inspiring Lives. The Development Centre is in the final stages of completion. Once the building is complete, we will be advertising to try and increase the number of clients who attend. We will continue to deliver a good quality service which is respected by all.

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

**Governing document**

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Accept Care Ltd is a company limited by guarantee, having no share capital and governed by and Memorandum and Articles of Association.

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**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

**Organisational structure**

The current Management team is currently D M Nixon as Registered Manager and Managing Director. Mrs T D Nixon is Head of Quality and Compliance. Ms T Daley as Head of Operations. Mr P M Riley is Finance Manager. Ms J Peacock is HR Manager. Mrs J Malpass is Training and Development Manager.

**Risk management**

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

The biggest threat to services and disruption to services remains COVID-19 and any other future pandemics. We continue to manage any outbreaks well and all have been contained relatively quickly and no one has been affected in the long term, with no deaths or additional disability as a result. We continue to be vigilant and have acquired significant stocks of PPE in the event of future shortages.

The Charity has been made aware of funding errors from its main funders at Durham County Council and the NHS Clinical commissioning groups. The charity continues to track and recover any under payments. We have improved our financial tracking processes to give greater evidence in the event of disputes.

Recruitment in an almost saturated environment continues to be challenging and as a result we have increased pay scales in an attempt to ensure we recruit the best staff possible. We have also upgraded our website which has been an excellent recruitment tool. We also use web promotion tools with Indeed to increase our rankings and viewability on line. Our recruitment continues to be strong coupled with improved rates of pay for staff with retention rates improving as well.

The development of day services will create more opportunities for the Charity and prevent other organisations from offering superior services to people, we support. It allows for a new range of opportunities for service users and better range of opportunities for income generation lessening dependence on the current main funders. We are now supporting some complex individuals within the service that have been unable to sustain similar placements in the past. This includes a number of external attendees that live at home with families. The day service is also now making a contribution to the overall service and hopes to eventually generate a small profit whilst adding value to the reputation of the Charity.

We have had no tribunal cases this year and HR processes have been further refined and enforced to help ensure full compliance with employment law.

**Directors/Trustees**

The board that was formed in 2015 continues to perform well with improved communications and performance being noted as the service transforms itself into a very credible and professional service. We have retired two trustees to ensure that only one trustee now remains who is indirectly funded by the charity. No Trustees are now employees.

We have added Gillian McArdle to the board of directors and Derek McClure has retired on the grounds of ill health. We aim to add further volunteer trustees with the aim of adding bid writing and fundraising experience in the near future. We are advertising with the VONNE network and want to attract people with previous experience of the care industry, we are mindful not to appoint people who do not share the aims and values of the charity, which has made recruitment of new trustees more difficult.

On appointment of a Trustee they would have an opportunity to meet the rest of the board. The Managing Director would develop an induction plan for the trustee dependent on their area of expertise and interest. The Training and Development Manager would identify any training needs in accordance with the Trustee.

The board delegates much of its functions to the managing director who in turn consults the board on areas such as high-cost purchases (over £2k), salary changes and legal issues. It would also consult on things like legal issues and where the Charity is affected by changes in legislation.

All managers pay are discussed and approved by the board of trustees, In the event of the Managing Director and Head of Quality and Compliance these are discussed in private by the other trustees without the Managing Director and Head of Quality and Compliance being present. All Managers have an appraisal and the increase in salary is determined by performance and after an annual appraisal.

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**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

**Registered Company number**

NI047633 (Northern Ireland)

**Registered Charity number**

100855

**Registered office**

Glendinning House  
6 Murray Street  
Belfast  
BT1 6DN

**Principal address**

16-20 Station Road  
Stanley  
Co. Durham  
DH9 0JL

**Trustees**

D M Nixon Managing Director  
Ms P Smith  
F B Grand  
D A McClure (resigned 11/1/2023)  
G M Mcardle (appointed 17/1/2023)

**Senior Statutory Auditor**

David Holloway BA (Hons) FCA DChA

**Auditors**

Ribchesters Group Limited  
Registered Auditors  
Finchale House  
Belmont Business Park  
Durham  
DH1 1TW

**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The trustees (who are also the directors of Accept Care Ltd for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES - continued**

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

**AUDITORS**

The auditors, Ribchesters Group Limited, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 6 October 2023 and signed on the board's behalf by:

Ms P Smith - Trustee